STAR WARS ART

CONCEPT

FOREWORD BY **JOE JOHNSTON** INTRODUCTION BY **DOUG CHIANG**

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When a trio of artists signed on to help create the first characters, creatures, vehicles, and worlds of *Star Wars*, George Lucas's esoteric space-fantasy project, they could hardly have known they were jump-starting the most iconic film imagery in history. After the onslaught of the first film, the *Star Wars* galaxy has never ceased expanding, becoming a limitless canvas of creativity and invention. Thirty-five years later, the iconography of *Star Wars* includes new films, animated TV shows, and video games. Now, as Lucasfilm opens its vast archives of concept sketches and paintings, *Star Wars* fans can finally pore over the beautiful artwork generated by these numerous productions.

From Ralph McQuarrie and Joe Johnston to Doug Chiang, Ryan Church, Iain McCaig, Erik Tiemens, and the next generation of animation and video-game artists, *Star Wars Art: Concept*, the fourth book in the George Lucas–curated *Star Wars Art* series, collects the very best *Star Wars* conceptual artwork in a single volume for the first time, charting its fascinating evolution. Indeed, artwork from all six *Star Wars* movies is displayed alongside art for *Star Wars* television series—such as *Ewoks*, *Droids*, and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*—as well as those ambitious designs for unrealized projects, even including the proposed TV show *Detours* and the video game *1313*.

Spanning from 1975 to the present, *Star Wars Art: Concept* offers a fascinating look at the specialized field of conceptual design: the art of transforming mere thoughts into visual masterpieces. The simple idea of a chase, a fight, a creature, an exotic setting, or a journey gives rise to page after page of imaginative designs—which often capture lush, layered worlds in all their intricacy. From pen, paint, and paper to digital media, relive the breathtaking scenes, vehicles, and characters that generations of viewers have embraced and made their own. *Star Wars Art: Concept* is a book unlike any other—a celebration of the artists who dreamed up the most enduring and popular saga of our time.

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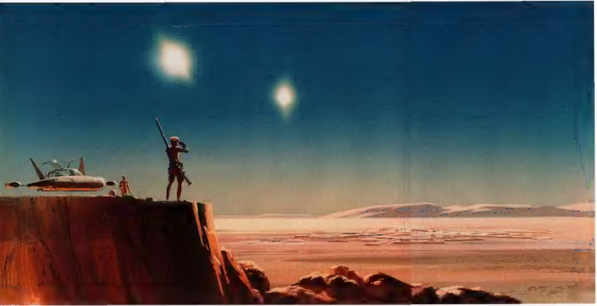
ABRAMS, NEW YORK



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PREVIOUS SPREAD

Ralph McQuarrie
[illegible]

Concept art for *The Empire Strikes Back*

[illegible]

LEFT

Ralph McQuarrie
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Concept art for an early draft of *A New Hope*

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FOREWORD

When I interviewed for an art job with John Dykstra and Bob Shepherd at the as-yet-unnamed Industrial Light & Magic facility in Van Nuys, California, in August of 1975, I had no idea what the job entailed. I had read on a flyer that the group was looking for designers and draftsmen for a "space movie," which sounded like fun after designing products that had to actually function, be mass-produced for a price, and be marketed. When effects expert John Dykstra mentioned that the job included drawing storyboards, I said, "Great!" He asked, "Can you start tomorrow?" I went straight to a bookstore and browsed the art section to find out what the hell a storyboard was.

There were many other artists more qualified than I was, but, as it turned out, I fit right in with the mindset of the small group that had assembled to create the visual effects for the original Star Wars trilogy. There were other people on the payroll who had never worked in film before, but they were all talented at what they did. In retrospect, our inexperience was actually an advantage. We were creating things that had never been seen before, building new technology to capture those things—and we didn't know what was impossible. We tried everything. We had a lot of failures and many more successes, and the trail was blazed for many, many films that followed.

For a young designer who had envisioned resigning himself to a career of chrome toasters and plastic hair dryers, the films of the Star Wars trilogy opened the doors to unlimited creative freedom. Suddenly everything I was designing didn't have to work, it only had to look like it did and be cool looking in the process. But my thinking on design was grounded in a philosophy instilled in me by the industrial design department at Cal State Long Beach, where form always followed function, where every design problem deserved an elegant and practical solution. So, with a few liberties taken for the alternate reality of a galaxy far, far away, I tried to give the ships and vehicles, and even some of the creatures, their own brand of accessible realism that went beyond the superficial "styling" of science fiction craft that came before and after.

In this eight-year quest to interpret George Lucas's imagination into the hardware and creatures, fashion and architecture of an entire galaxy, the late Ralph McQuarrie was a source of endless inspiration, a mentor, co-creator, and friend. His original concept illustrations not only set the visual style of the trilogy, they were instrumental in convincing the decision makers at Twentieth Century Fox that Star Wars was an idea worth a roll of the dice.

When it was time to hire an assistant on *The Empire Strikes Back*, I looked at literally hundreds of portfolios and interviewed a long and enthusiastic line of contenders. I avoided artists with film and fantasy illustration backgrounds, as well as those who could beautifully render the Ford of the future. I found an excellent artist in Nilo Rodis-Jamero, who had most recently been designing heavy equipment, earthmovers, bulldozers, and the like for FMC. Nilo's grounded sense of design fit perfectly in the well-established "physics-based" realm of Star Wars.

Working on the Star Wars films was really two separate jobs requiring distinctly different mindsets. At the beginning of each project George would come with his shopping list of characters, creatures, vehicles, and spacecraft. For the next several months the art department walls would be covered with hundreds of sketches and wildly different approaches to the same design problem. George was seldom specific in his requests, asking for something as vague as "an Imperial ground attack vehicle" or a "Rebel Alliance cargo ship," giving us as much freedom as possible and letting us determine the direction of most of the designs (which then had to have full-size components created in the construction shops, at Elstree Studios, near London, where they were building the sets and props).

If there were twenty sketches of a creature that would become Yoda, for instance, George might pick two or three and send us off in that direction. One day he came into the art department with a red ink stamp pad and three rubber stamps reading, WONDERFUL, OK, and NOT SO OK. It made the filing process simple. All we needed were three big drawers.

Ralph McQuarrie worked at his home studio across the bay in Berkeley on *Empire* and *Jedi*, but he would visit ILM a couple of times a month. Nilo and I very much looked forward to these visits, because Ralph would usually bring a full-color illustration or two that depicted our designs in a dramatic and very cinematic moment. It was inspiring and mildly disheartening—in the realization that Ralph was in a league all his own, one that we could only marvel at.

The most exciting thing about the concept art phase was the notion that anything was possible. We didn't worry about what some of our designs would cost to build or animate, or how the performer was going to survive a steaming day in the rubber suit. If an idea worked, someone would figure out how to turn it into three-dimensional reality, usually with a lot of back-and-forth with the model builders or the English construction crews, during which the usual question was something like, "Guys, would it be okay if it looked like this instead?" Rather than let the builders decide the final design, we would take the idea back to the drawing board and solve the problem they were having to our aesthetic satisfaction.

Concept art serves a dual purpose in this phase of preproduction. It tells the entire crew what these places, things, and creatures are going to look like, but it also inspires us. Creating the visual effects for the original trilogy was a grind of twelve-hour days and six-or, sometimes, seven-day weeks. I made sure that the art department was open during work hours, and the crews knew that they were always welcome to walk through the gallery where every current design-in-progress had its place on the wall, and where we would often hear, "Oh, so that's what it's going to look like!"

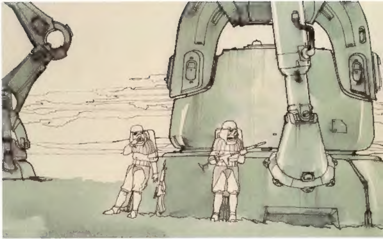
When the design phase was well under way and model builders were translating two dimensions into three, the art department would shift gears into storyboard mode—the second mindset. George was even less specific during this phase, giving us suggestions such as, "They jump onto the speeder bikes and race off into the forest, and have a big chase and Luke and Leia win." We would then generate hundreds of storyboards that were merely ideas, without connective tissue tying them to other moments in a sequence, just small story bits of action. What can our heroes do to elude a pursuing Imperial biker squad? With a gallon jar of markers we would then build an action sequence on the wall with these disjointed moments, throw out some, add interesting close-ups, redraw most of it, and present it to George while it was still on the wall. We quickly learned to photocopy the originals and put them safely away after George came in with a permanent red marker to cross out unnecessary shots.

The ordeal of storyboarding, designing the action sequences, and then hearing George's critique of our work was the most exciting part of the entire process for me. I learned more in those few months on each of the Star Wars films than I could have ever learned in film school. The sessions would sometimes go on for hours, with George moving shots around, ripping others off the wall, and all of us coming up with ideas for new beats of action. A sequence was often almost unrecognizable from the one we had started with. There were always plenty of "What if we did this?" moments where a simple change could send the action spinning off in a new direction.

Then came the heavy lifting, when Nilo and I would have to turn a sequence around in a few days, usually starting from scratch, to incorporate the new ideas, redrawing hundreds of storyboards, so they could be distributed to the visual effects and live-action crews. It was white-knuckle time, late nights and weekends, and endless pots of coffee—but at the end we would stand back and walk the rows of storyboards pinned to the wall and feel the action, getting a sense of the way it would someday play on the big screen. We imagined that we were the first audience and that if it worked in pen and marker with Led Zeppelin playing in the background, it would work on an eighty-foot screen with a stirring John Williams score to drive it home.

It's now been close to forty years since I first sat down with George Lucas and a pad of paper in the drafty, repurposed warehouse in the San Fernando Valley that was the original location of Industrial Light & Magic. Having since directed nine films of my own, I can honestly say that I don't think I've been more challenged, more inspired, or had more fun than I had designing the hardware, spacecraft, and especially the action sequences for the Star Wars trilogy. While I may not have known just what an impact the films would eventually have on popular culture, I did recognize that I was living a once-in-a-lifetime experience and it was great fun to be along for the ride.

JOE JOHNSTON



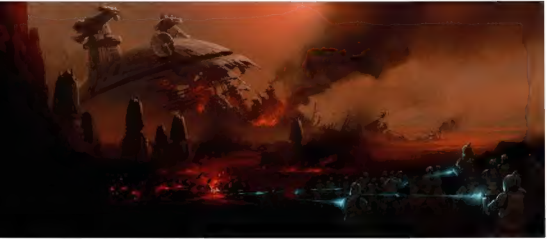
ABOVE

Joe Johnston

Imperial stormtroopers rest against the gigantic "feet" of an AT-AT

Concept art for *The Empire Strikes Back*

PEN, INK, AND WATERCOLOR ON PAPER



ABOVE

Ryan Church

Clone troopers and Trade Federation

battleship [illegible]

Concept art for Attack of the Clones

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PREFACE

In 1977, I was too young to understand Star Wars in any way other than purely viscerally. I saw it with my family like the rest of the world, but I wasn't able to follow the plot. The visuals, music, and incredible sound effects, however, captured me as powerfully as any film I've seen since. At the time, I was only able to express my interest by attempting to get my hands on every toy spaceship and action figure I could. As I got older, my natural love for drawing became apparent; three years later, when *The Art of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* came out, I had pretty much settled on a career path.

I pored over those Star Wars sketchbooks and "making of" books—there were a lot of them in those days! My young mind was barely able to comprehend that those completely convincing sets and props were made of plaster, two-by-fours, and plastic parts. Somehow, instead of finding the grungy reality of moviemaking and set design deflating, I found it exhilarating to learn that the snow on the Hoth sets was something like Styrofoam and that many of the miniature spaceships were detailed with old WWII battleship models. This was great stuff! Ralph McQuarrie's and Joe Johnston's illustrations and sketches served as lessons to me: entire treatises on design, composition, and mood contained in the tiniest sketch. They combined the technical ability to capture a scene with something much harder to do: evoking a mood and causing the viewer to feel a sense of place and moment. Johnston and McQuarrie's art is almost documentarian—the beauty and strength of a sketch or painting are surpassed only by the amount of believability of the fantasy. *Not realism*, but believability—that's what grounds the *Star Wars* universe as well. Today, with 3-D computer programs and endless layers in Photoshop, we are able to create photoreal imagery in very little time. But the bold or subtle composition and indicated detail are still the most important part of the image, no matter how realistic.

Fast forward: I studied design in school, carefully and way-too-optimistically setting my sights on somehow working on a *Star Wars* movie. [illegible]

I was lucky to have started my career at a very special time: at the intersection between traditional analog design and computer-aided design. After a job in ILM's digital features department, I finally got the chance when I started working on Episode II. I soon found myself face-to-face with George Lucas in his editing bay; he needed some background painting for an animatic sequence he was cutting together. Tens and thousands of sketches, designs, and illustrations later, I was able to say I'd served as Concept Design Supervisor on Episodes II and III.

Looking back, these were by far the most fun and rewarding shows I've ever worked on. We could have anything we wanted in terms of reference or inspiration (Want to screen *Lawrence of Arabia* in George's private theater, or go wander the halls of the Archive building, or look at swimming newts down at the ranch's Lake Ewok for inspiration? No problem!). But it was a lot of hard work, too, and I pulled more all-nighters working on *Star Wars* than in all my schooling and professional work since, combined. My coworkers were my close friends, and there was a huge feeling of collaboration and camaraderie that can only come from working on a long-term project for a visionary director. Part of the magic of it all came from the fact that we were up in the hills of Marin, in a Victorian mansion nestled within as beautiful and serene a valley as it's possible to find, working on this cutting-edge, sprawling, iconic space opera! On rainy days, in the animation section across the hall, we would sometimes toast marshmallows on the crackling gas-less, wood-burning heat stove that was next to the rendering mainframe.

Working on *Star Wars*, for me, was a chance to play in George's sandbox and to try and follow in the steps of Joe Johnston, Ralph McQuarrie, and Doug Chiang—and, hopefully, to bring some of my design sensibility and aesthetic to the *Star Wars* galaxy. If you think it's fun to watch the movies, let me tell you, it's even more fun to work on them! I love the long, intricate process of design—from trying to capture an entire dramatic moment in a small pencil thumbnail sketch to creating tighter illustrations to reverse-engineering the nuts and bolts of the vehicles, settings, and props. I realized very soon that you're only as good as your last successful design, and that one has to work extremely hard to come up with something to impress George. Every Friday, we would present our week's work to George, and we always wanted to try and show him something great. Though I didn't participate in it too much directly, I was thrilled to be sitting next to the artists working on the costume, creature, and character designs.

For design inspiration on Episode II's end battle and most of Episode III, I went back and looked at what George had done with the original trilogy. Looking through the old artwork was like archaeology—watching the evolution of now-classic designs that live and breathe in the movies—first each grew through a long development from words on a page through a series of scribbles, sketches, models, renderings, and sculptures. I pulled together a "backstory" that would serve as a touchstone and reference for much of the design work. To me, the first trilogy had been about a group of rebels fighting a vastly technologically and numerically superior enemy, which had echoes of the Vietnam War (many of the OT designs have the same kind of angularity and presence of a sixties Phantom jet or Sherman tank). So accepting that logic and working backward to the prequels, and looking at the designs Doug had come up with for Episode I, I imagined Episodes I, II, and III to be the *Star Wars* version of World War II—a galaxy-wide war, planet against planet. Thus a lot of the prequel trilogy designs have a subtle but pervasive World War II "vibe" to them—from the Dazzle Ship paint jobs on some of the larger warships to the fine sculpting and [illegible] design of Grievous's ship to the South Pacific–feeling world of Kashyyyk and even to the feel of the jungle planet Felucia and the [illegible], ragged look of the clone troopers.

Since the *Star Wars* movies I've been able to work on many blockbuster film projects, but I've also expanded my skill set to work in video games. I was lucky enough to work on *1313*, and it was an experience of jumping back into the universe and hitting the ground running. I was newly able to build many of the sets and vehicles in 3-D and then design the space in a much more comprehensive way than I had before.

I've since had the good fortune to work on *War of the Worlds*, the *Transformers* movies, *Avatar*, and the new *Star Trek* movies, and for literally every American director on my bucket list. As a creative experience and a rewarding challenge, I put *Star Wars* at the top of that list.

RYAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

A blank sheet of white paper never looked more intimidating.

One beautiful autumn day in 1994, a dream came true: I was offered the incredible opportunity to lead the art and design team for the new Star Wars prequel film. It was the fulfillment of a childhood dream, set in motion eighteen years earlier, when I first saw *Star Wars: A New Hope*.

I still clearly remember that first day on the job at Skywalker Ranch. Sitting at my drafting table on the third floor of the Main House, a blank sheet of white paper before me, I was filled with absolute excitement—and sheer terror. Faced with the reality of trying to fulfill my childhood dream of living up to Ralph McQuarrie's incredible legacy while meeting George Lucas's very high standards, I froze. I was unable to draw, and my mind raced with self-doubt. I wondered how I could avoid disappointing the millions of Star Wars fans who were so deeply invested in this universe, the same universe that profoundly changed me as a teenager. How would my heroes Joe Johnston and Ralph McQuarrie judge my work as I invaded their world?

Pencil in hand, hovering over the blank paper, I closed my eyes and searched for an idea. None came to mind. Then, out of my doubt and despair, the answer appeared. I remembered what it was like to draw as a kid, a time when drawing was without pressure or expectation, a time when ideas flowed freely with no boundaries.

Back then, growing up in Michigan, I remember always drawing. I can still recall using my math book as one of my first sketchbooks. Strange characters would populate the thin two-inch margin surrounding obscure mathematical formulas. Whether I was depicting spaceships with robots or fantasy worlds with exotic creatures, drawing allowed me to escape my mundane childhood. Looking back now, I realize that what I was doing then was concept design in its purest form.

Kids are born to be natural concept artists. I say that not to make light of the discipline or imply that anybody can be a concept artist, but rather to say that when kids draw, they are naturally inventing and creating from the ether. Their drawings can be lavish and poetic, and yet simple, because the underlying idea is what matters. They visualize worlds and characters, stories and plots, action and drama—all with no pretense.

Unfortunately, most of us outgrow this period of unbridled creativity, exhausted by rules, reality, or fear. But for those of us who manage to retain this childhood innocence into adulthood, we become concept artists.

Eighteen years later, I was staring at that blank sheet of white paper. By remembering, I realized then that I had temporarily lost sight of the creative spark that came so easily as a child. I knew that in order to turn this insurmountable obstacle into an insurmountable opportunity, I had to recapture that childhood spark again.

Unfortunately, even though I can draw well, art has always been a struggle for me. The ability to create concept art is more than just a frame of mind. It is also a set of specific artistic skills at the highest level that often require years of training, discipline, and hard work. As an artist, I didn't have formal training. I didn't go to art school. I went to film school instead. I thought that in order to be a film designer, I should study film.

As a result, I had to learn art on the job. Fortunately, incredibly talented artists who were equally generous with their time surrounded me. I hungrily devoured their techniques, and learned and adapted them for my own use.

Still, even today, most art skills remain a mystery to me. My method is more one of trial and error and brute force. Sometimes, it is still difficult to know if my technique is right. As a result, I find myself rediscovering and relearning methods that I thought I had conquered before.

Although my art skills may have been lacking, I discovered that I had good instincts for design. My lack of formal training forced me to trust my intuition instead. I relied on my gut to know what was working and what was not. And even though I may not be able to execute a design or a painting as well as another artist, I can see the idea and know how to make it better. I don't mean that in an arrogant way; quite the contrary. I realized that techniques can be learned, but the instinctive know-how, to know what is good design, is tougher to attain. And although techniques are crucial, it is the ideas and concepts that define an artist.

Now flash forward another eighteen years. I've worked in the film industry for over twenty-five years, and the challenges facing concept artists remain the same. How do you stay fresh? How do you create new ideas? How do you produce imagery that is emotional and powerful and serves the story?

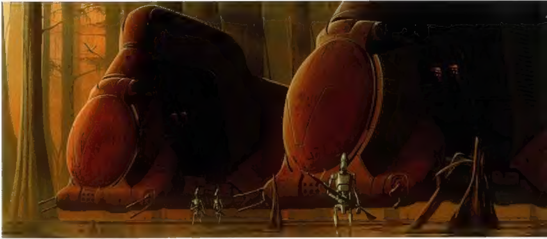
As concept artists, we need to be like magicians. We allow the audience to see and believe in the experience, while the mechanics of creation remain hidden and, in fact, very different from what is actually perceived. We help create illusions that suspend disbelief so that audiences can be immersed in the story.

What makes for good cinematic designs, then? While it may seem that fantastic worlds demand fantastic imagery, that is often not the case. Viewing objects from uncommon points of view can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. This was one of the biggest lessons I learned from George Lucas, perhaps the best artistic teacher. He taught me that in order to design for a future, you must look into the past. Research provides the foundation. It is never wise to design in a vacuum. Learn from history. Use history. The vast wealth of information accumulated from thousands of years of human culture provides inspiration and grounds ideas in reality.

Furthermore, filmmaking is by its nature a collaborative effort, and the job of the concept artist is not only to create art for the audience but also to inspire the artist within each director and cinematographer. By embracing the knowledge that there is no ownership in what we do—that it's not about who designed what, or who came up with the idea first—we can improve and strengthen what we create. Removing the ego liberates the artists to attain their fullest potential. The best ideas are often not singular events anyway but born out of team effort.

Today, having the great fortune of nearly thirty years as a concept artist and production designer, I am very thankful to be able to continue doing what I enjoy most. Although I may be considered a veteran in the industry, I feel like I'm still early on in my artistic career. There is still so much to learn. And as I look forward to my next thirty years, I'm reminded of that wonderful potential we all possess as children, something that I hope never to lose—that spectacular ability to create art without fear.

DOUG CHIANG



[illegible]

Doug Chiang
Trade Federation Droid Troop Transports on Naboo

Concept art for The Phantom Menace

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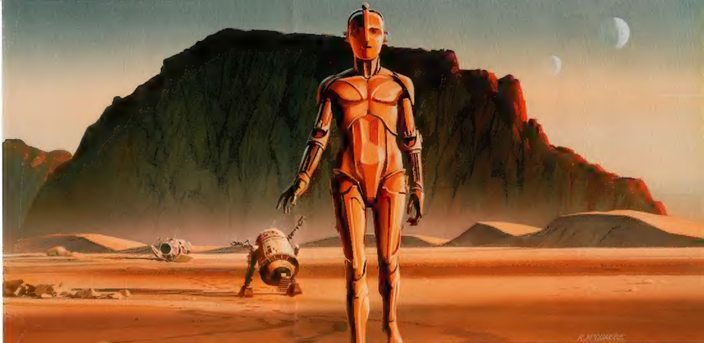
STAR WARS ART

CONCEPT

THE PLATES


R.MCQUARRIE

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Ralph McQuarrie
R2-D2 and C-3PO in the Tatooine Desert

Concept art for A New Hope

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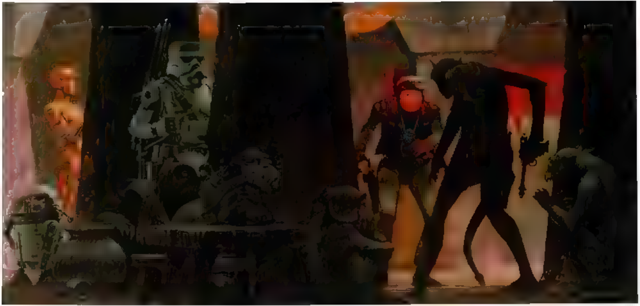

Ralph McQuarrie

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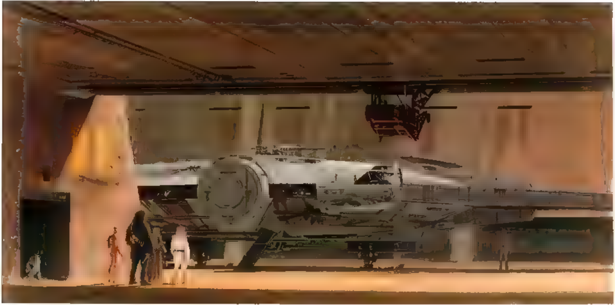

Ralph McQuarrie

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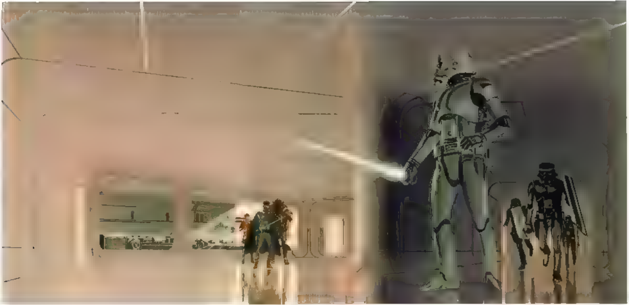

Ralph McQuarrie

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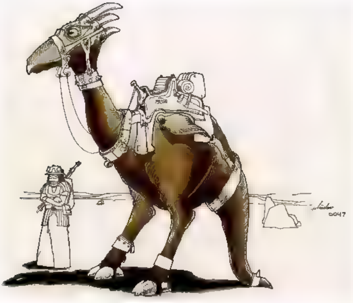

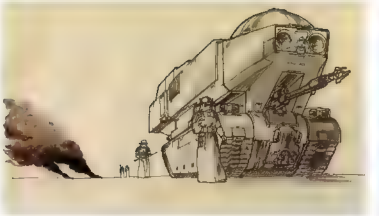

Joe Johnston
Imperial mounted trooper
Concept art for *The Empire Strikes Back*
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Joe Johnston
Imperial tank
Concept art for *The Empire Strikes Back*
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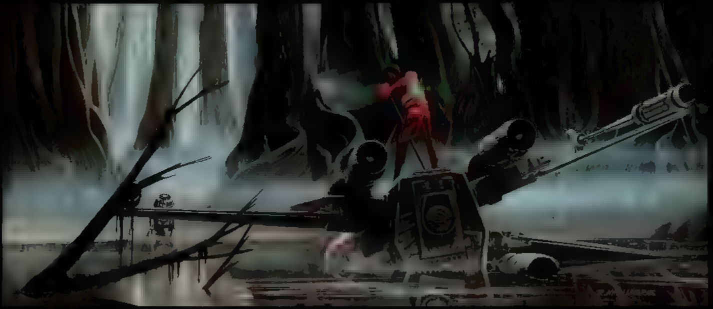

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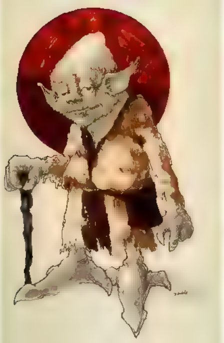

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Joe Johnston
Yoda

Concept art for The Empire Strikes Back

[illegible] 1978

Joe Johnston
Jabba's Palace

Concept art for Return of the Jedi

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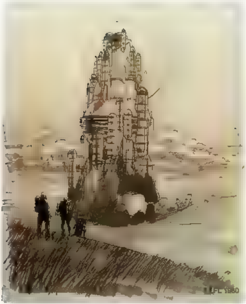

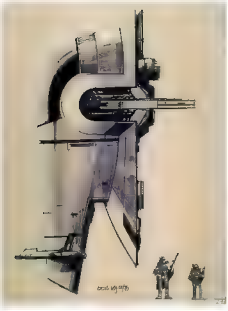

[illegible]

Nilo Rodis-Jamero
Boba Fett's Slave

Concept art for The Empire Strikes Back

[illegible]

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Joe Johnston
Boba Fett's Slave I [illegible]

Concept art for The Empire Strikes Back

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Ralph McQuarrie
Cloud City (detail)

Concept art for The Empire Strikes Back

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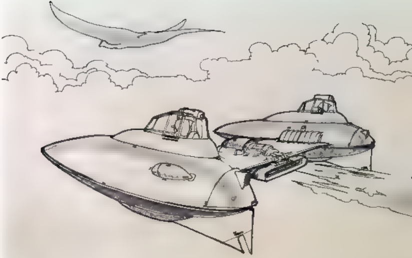

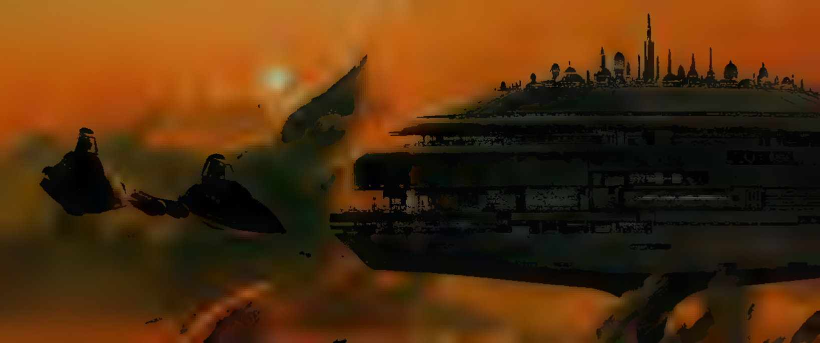

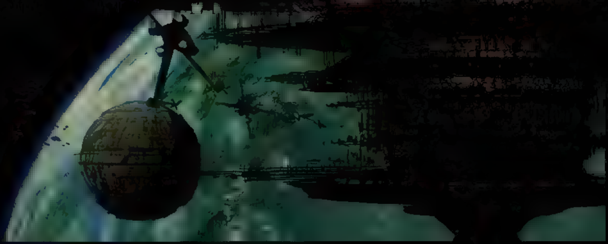

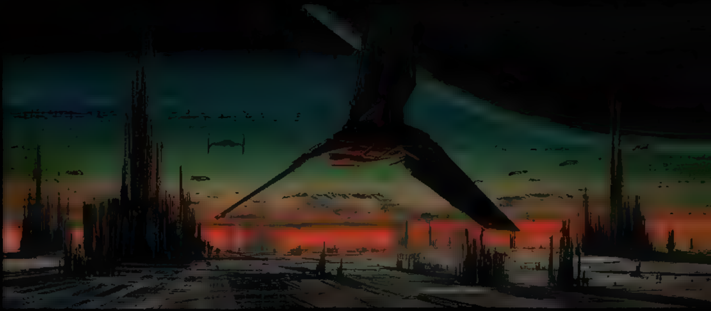

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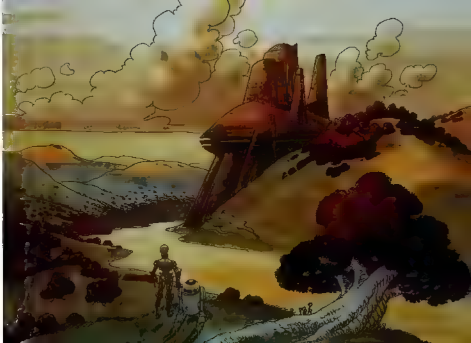

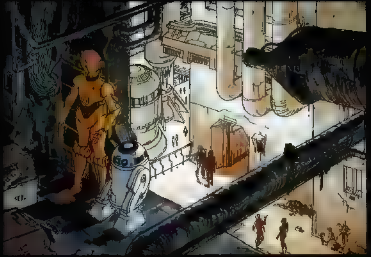

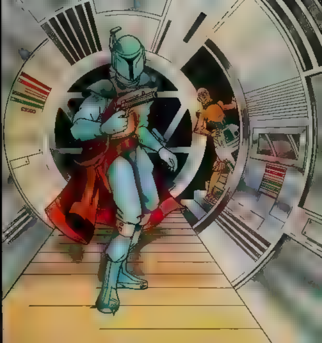

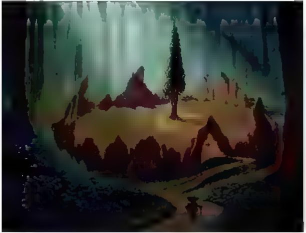

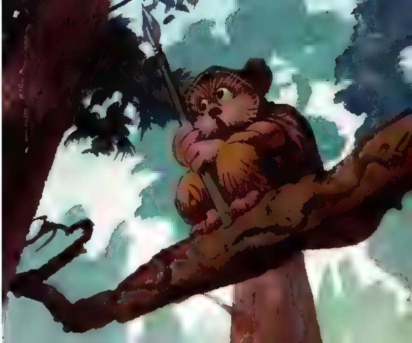

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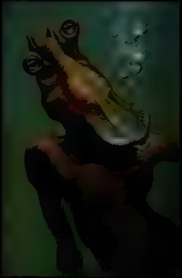

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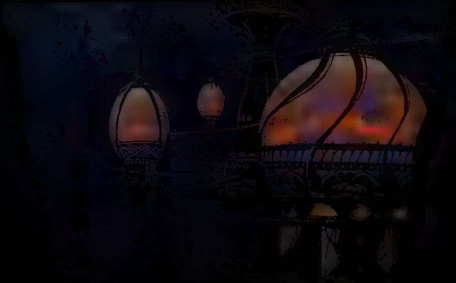

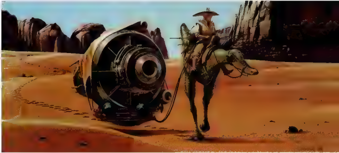

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Dong Chong

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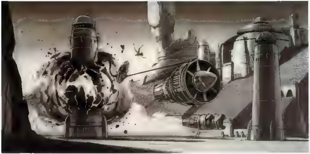
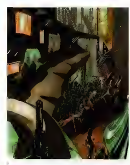
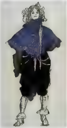
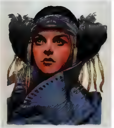


Doug Chiang







Left

Ed Natividad
Concept study

Concept art for Star Wars: Attack of the Clones

[illegible]

Middle

Iain McCaig
Padmé costume

Concept art for Star Wars: The Phantom Menace

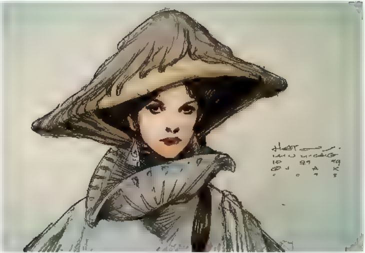
[illegible]

Right

Iain McCaig
Padmé's headdress

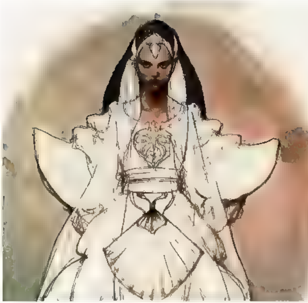
Concept art for Star Wars: The Phantom Menace

[illegible]


HAT
IAIN MCCAIG

Iain McCaig
Queen's head-dress

[illegible]



Iain McCaig
Padmé wedding costume

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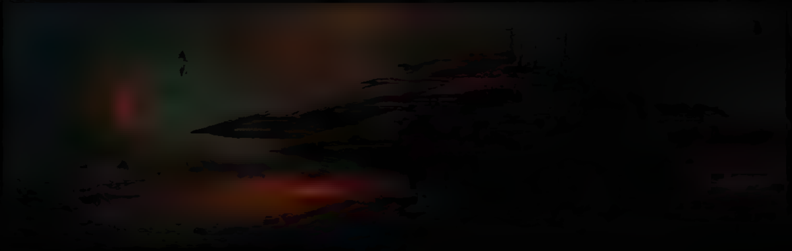

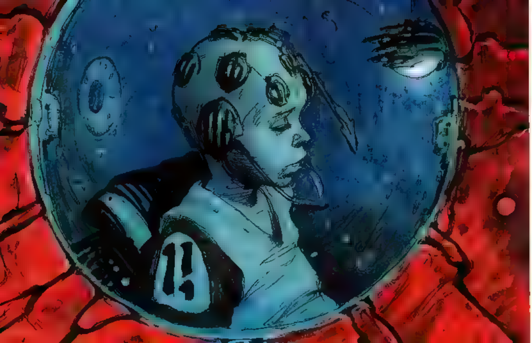

Iain McCaig

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[illegible]

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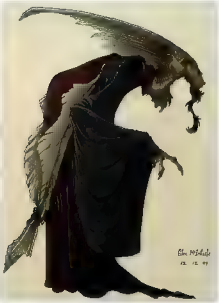

Glen McIntosh
12 12 99

[illegible]

Glen McIntosh

[illegible]

Concept art for Attack of the Clones

[illegible]

[illegible]

Iain McCaig

[illegible]

Concept art for Attack of the Clones

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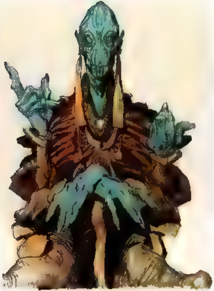
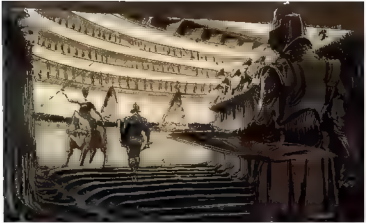
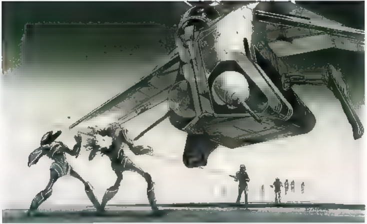






Ed Natividad
[illegible]

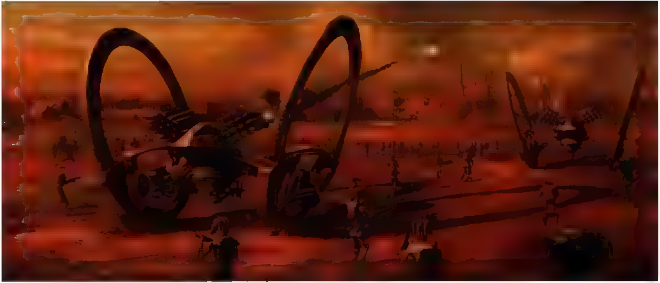
[illegible]

[illegible]

Doug Chiang
Republic gunship and [illegible] fight [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



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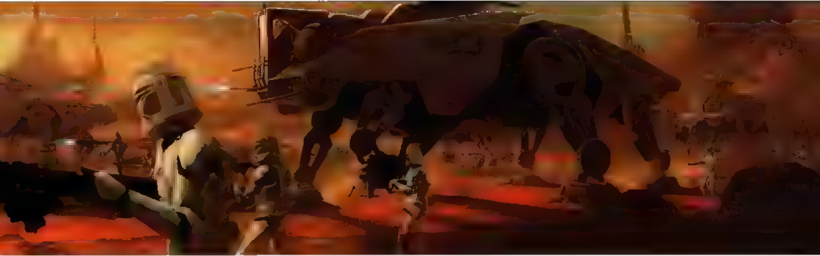

ABOVE

Ryan Church

Republic AT-TE

Concept art for *Attack of the Clones*

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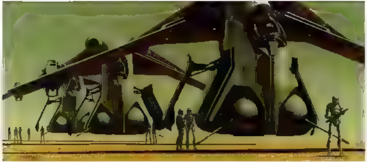

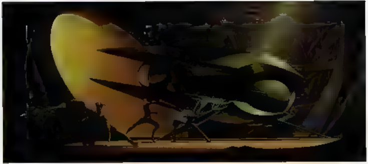

Doug Chiang
Republic gunships in the rally
Concept art for Attack of the Clones
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Doug Chiang
Lightsaber battle in [illegible] hangar
Concept art for Attack of the Clones
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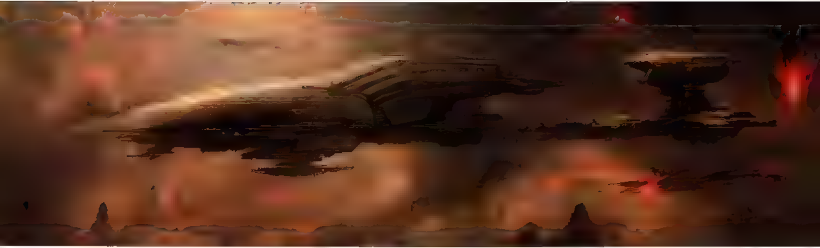
[illegible]



Erik Thomsen

[illegible]

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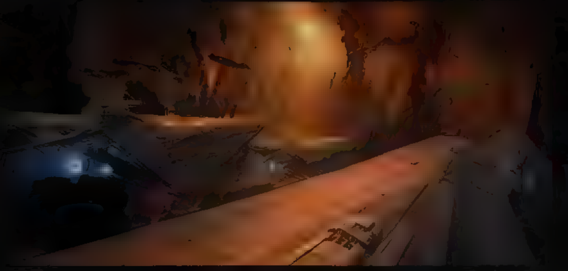

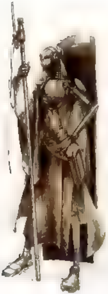

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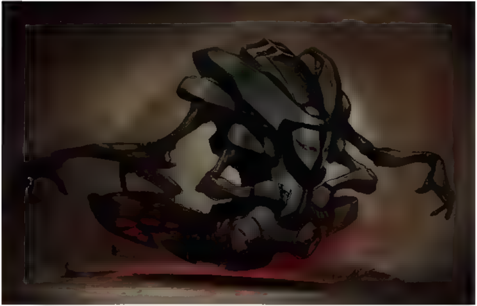

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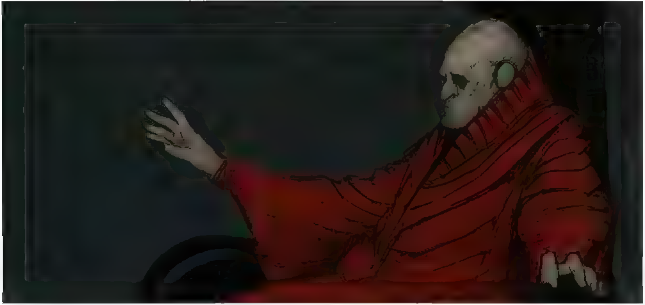

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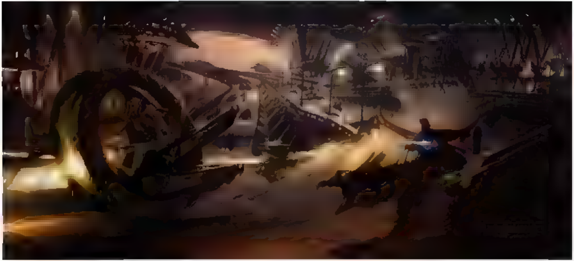


[illegible]

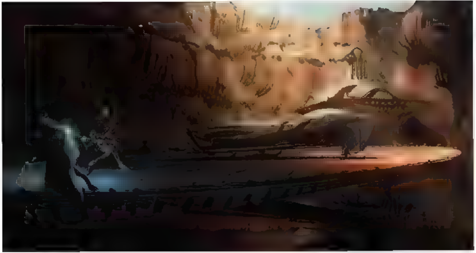
Ryan Church

[illegible] Grievous Hangar

[illegible]

[illegible] Revenge of the Sith

[illegible]



[illegible]

Ryan Church

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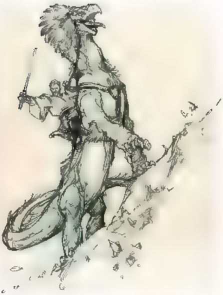
[illegible]

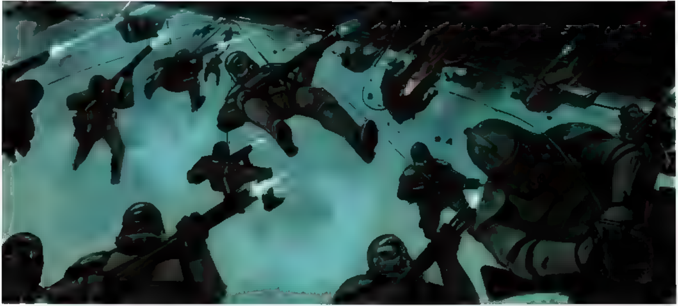
Sang Jun Lee

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]





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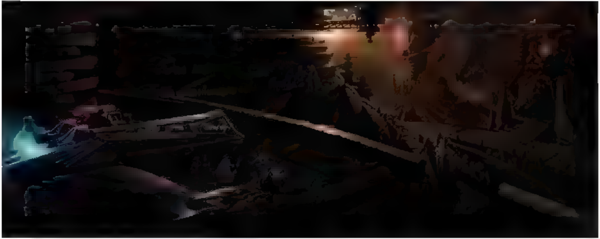

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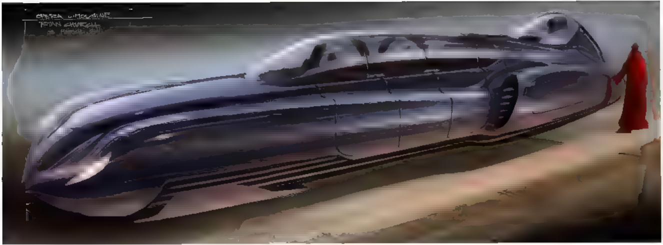
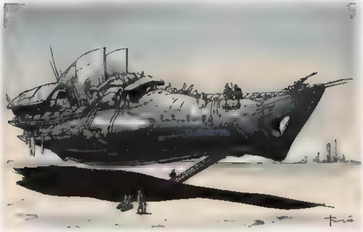
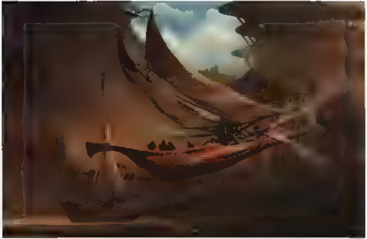

OPERA LIMOUSINE
RYAN CHURCH

Ryan Church
[illegible]

[illegible]





T. J. Frame
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Concept art for [illegible]
[illegible]

Ryan Church
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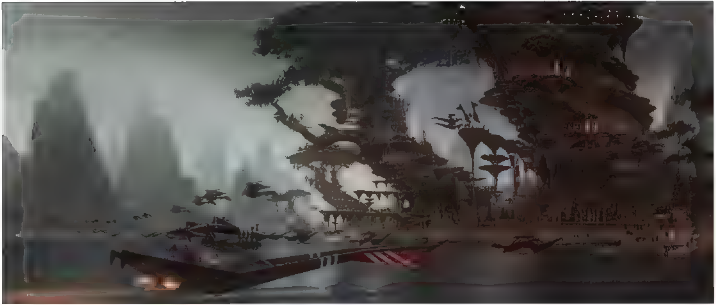
Concept art for [illegible]
[illegible]



Ryan Church

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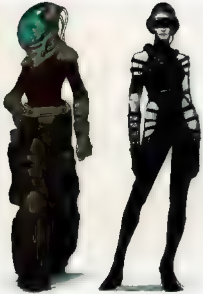

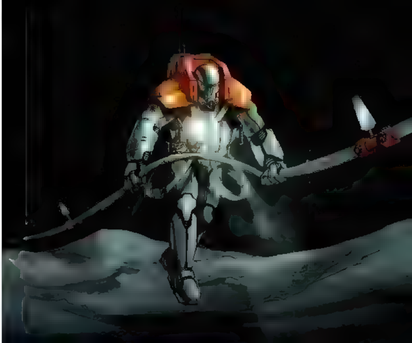

[illegible]

Sang Jun Lee
[illegible]

Concept art for Revenge of the Sith

[illegible]

Sang Jun Lee
[illegible]

Concept art for Revenge of the Sith

[illegible]

[illegible]

Warren Fu
[illegible]

Concept art for Revenge of the Sith

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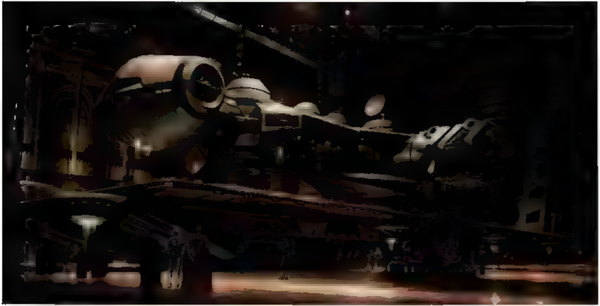

Ryan Church

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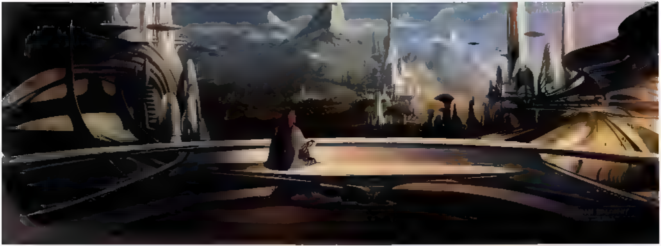

Ryan Church
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Concept art for *Revenge of the Sith*
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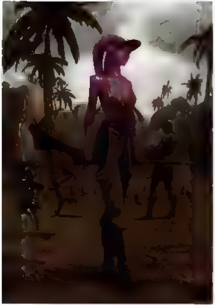

[illegible]
[illegible]

Concept art for Star Wars:
The Clone Wars [illegible]

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Concept art for Star Wars:
The Clone Wars [illegible]

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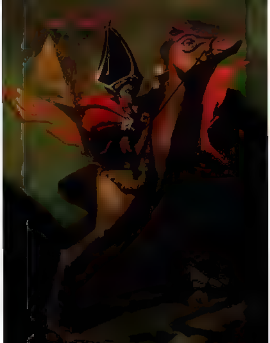

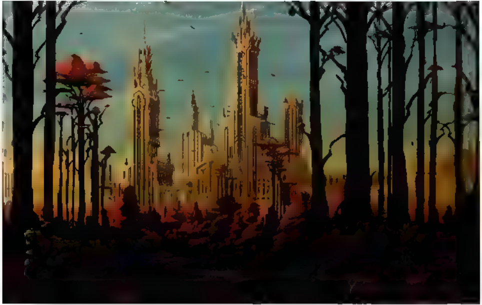

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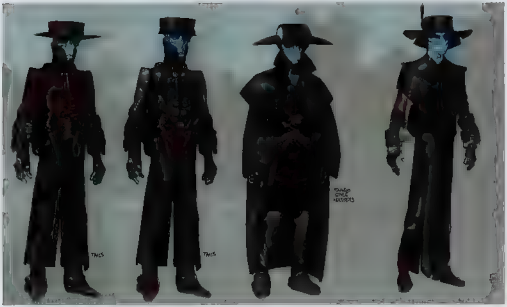
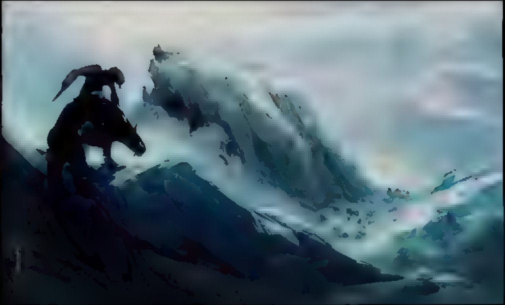

TAILS
TAILS
DJANGO
STYLE
HOLSTERS

[illegible]
[illegible]

Concept art for Star Wars
The Clone Wars — Republic Heroes
Krome Studios

[illegible]



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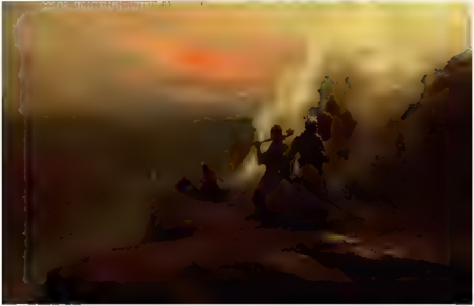

Wayne Lo

[illegible]

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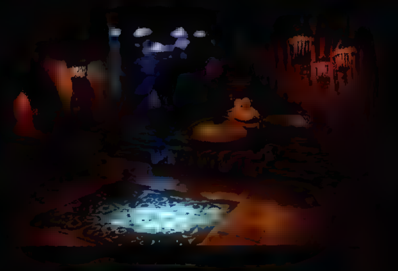

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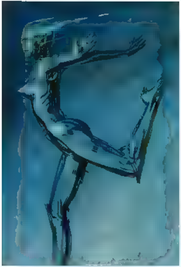

Hajime Sorayama
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Hajime Sorayama
[illegible]

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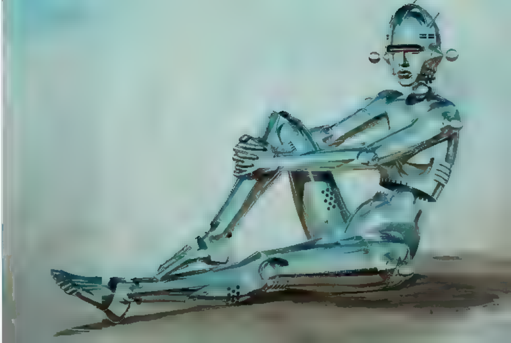

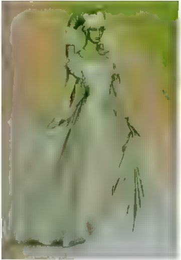

Hajime Sorayama

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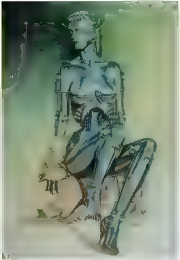

Hajime Sorayama

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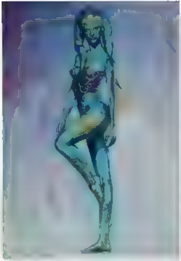

Hajime Sorayama

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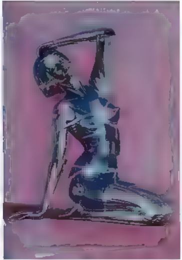

Hajime Sorayama

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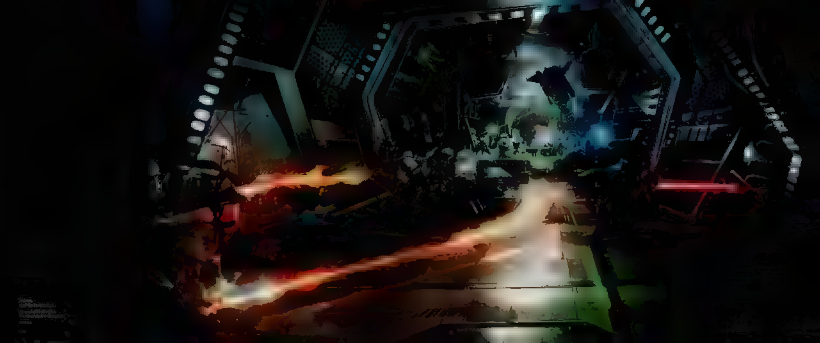
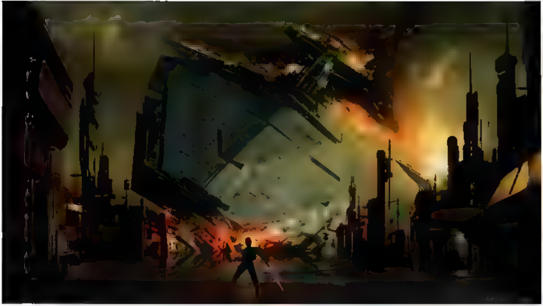




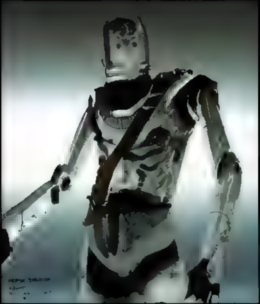
41

Amy Beth Christenson

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



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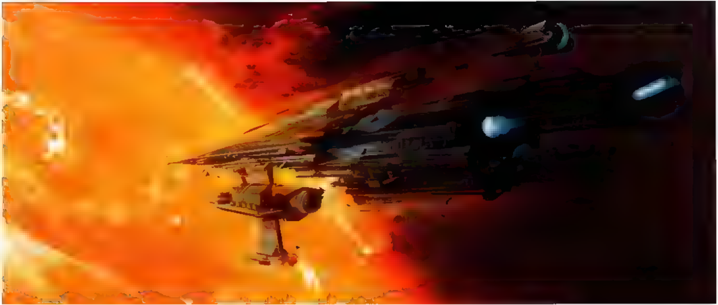

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Concept art for Star Wars
The Force Unleashed video game

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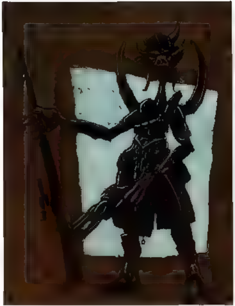

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Eddie Del Rio
Enemy Lancer

Concept art for Dark Void,
Enemy Lancer video game

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Eddie Del Rio
Deputy [illegible]

Concept art for Dark Void,
Deputy [illegible] video game

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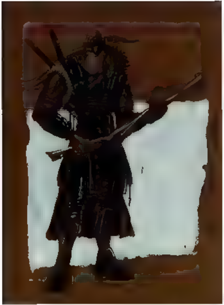

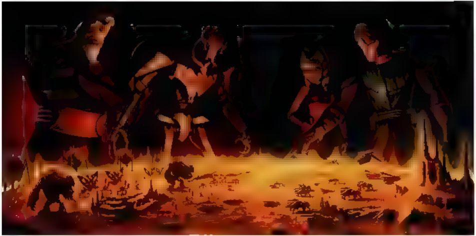

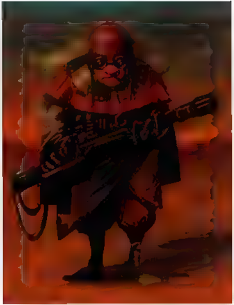

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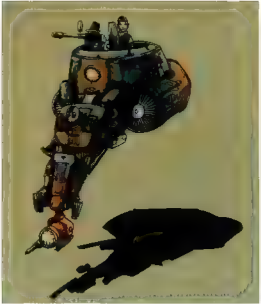

[illegible]

James Zhang
Two-person armed speeder

Concept art for Star Wars
Starfighter video game

[illegible]

[illegible]

Greg Knight
Sith warrior

Concept art for Star Wars
The Force Unleashed video game

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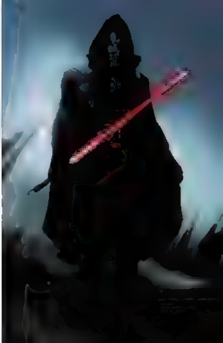

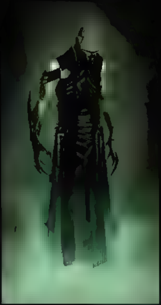

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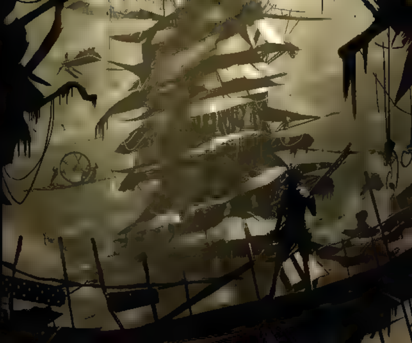

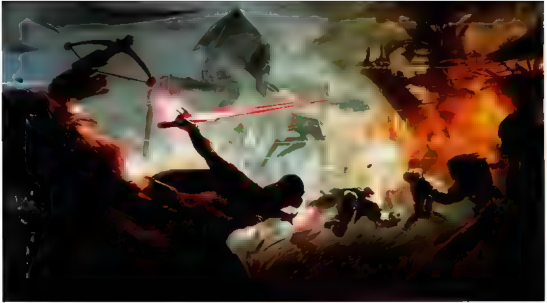

ABOVE

Amy Beth Christenson
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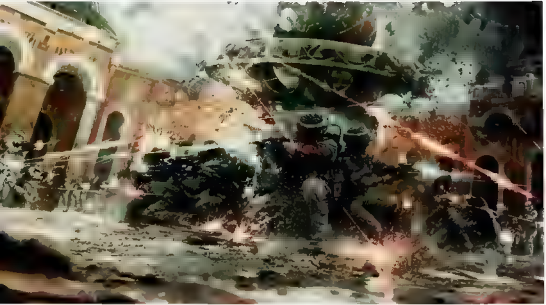
Concept art for Star Wars:
The Force Unleashed video game

DIGITAL



Richard Lim
Rebel and Imperial Firefight

Concept art for Star Wars: First Assault
proposed video game

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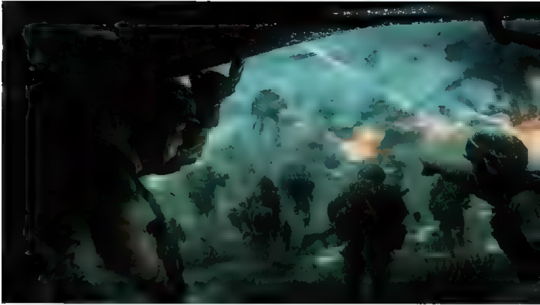

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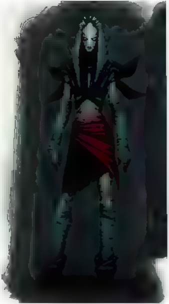

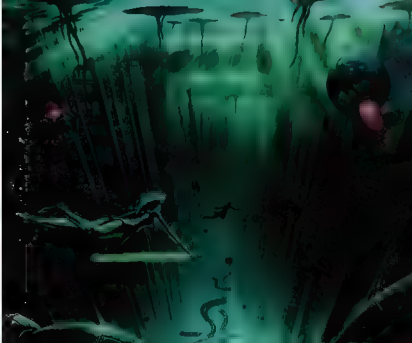

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Concept art for the [illegible]
The Elder Scrolls [illegible]
video game

[illegible]

[illegible]
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Concept art for the [illegible]
The Elder Scrolls [illegible]
video game

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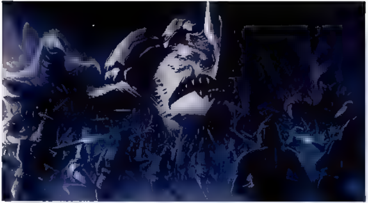

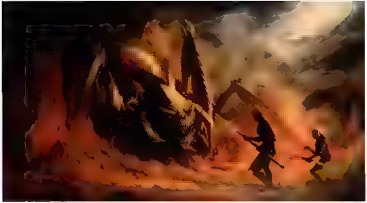

[illegible]

[illegible]

Clone troopers versus a [illegible]

Concept art for Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Jedi Alliance video game

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Anakin and Ahsoka face off against a [illegible]

Concept art for Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Jedi Alliance video game

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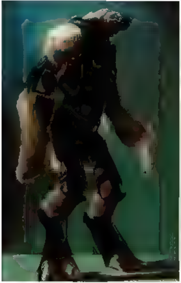

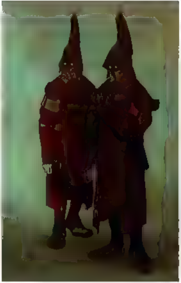

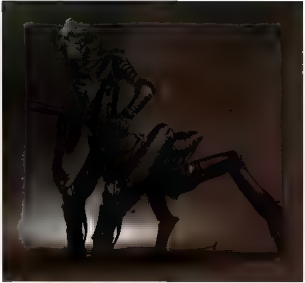

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Ryan Church
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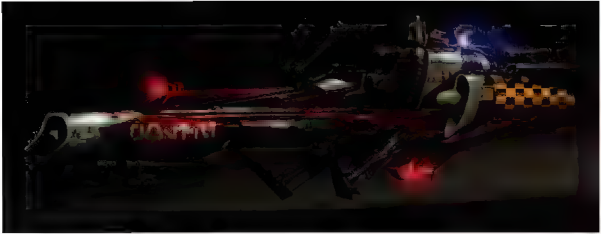

Ryan Church
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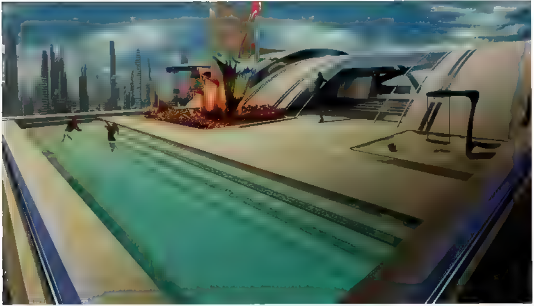

[illegible]

Ryan Church
Concept design: [illegible]

Concept art for the Star Wars [illegible]
proposed video game

[illegible]

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Ryan Church
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Concept art for the Star Wars [illegible]
proposed video game

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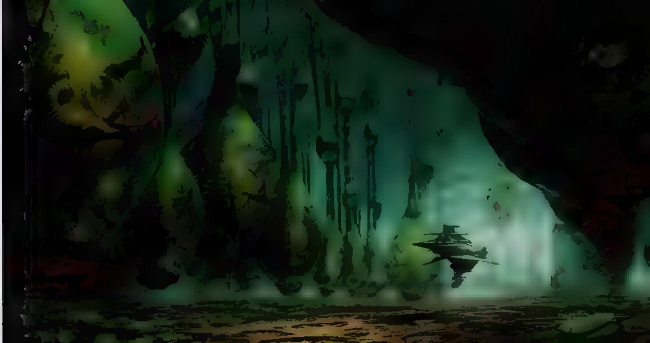

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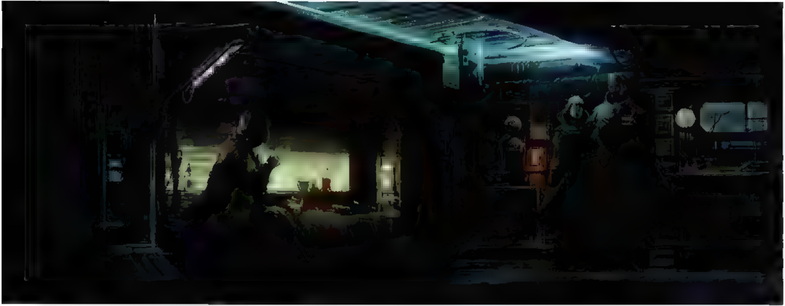

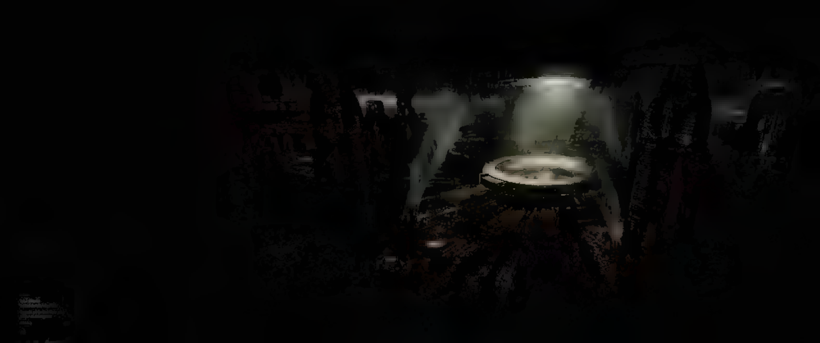

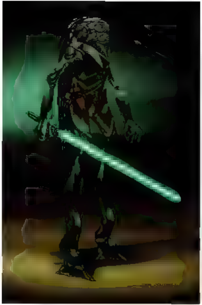

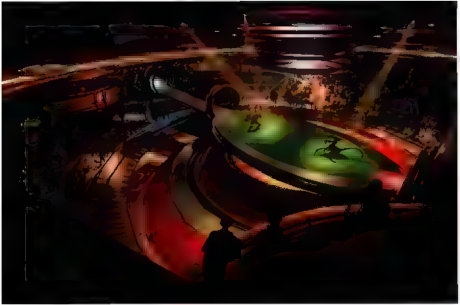

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Ryan Church

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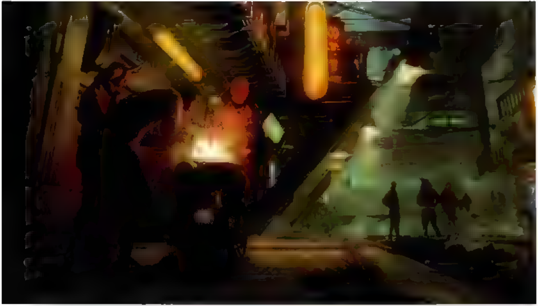

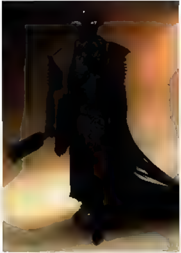

Unknown
[illegible]

[illegible]

Ryan Church
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Jonathan Bach is a concept artist and visual consultant working in the film, video game, and advertising industries. Bach attended Pasadena's Art Center College of Design [illegible] both [illegible] and entertainment design, and briefly worked as a [illegible] before making a full-time shift into the business of [illegible]. Bach has worked as a concept artist and visual consultant on such blockbuster films as [illegible] The Amazing Spider-Man, The Amazing Spider-Man 2, Oz: The Great and Powerful, and the [illegible]. In 2008, Bach joined the LucasArts team to [illegible] on the Star Wars 1313 proposed video game, where he helped expose the seedy underbelly of the galaxy [illegible] approachable imagery and clean [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

[illegible] Chan, a conceptual visual development artist, has worked with some of the most [illegible] on projects spanning the film, animation, and gaming industries. Among Chan's notable animated film projects are Robert Zemeckis's A Christmas Carol, Mars Needs Moms, Curious George, and Disney's The [illegible]. At LucasFilm, Chan produced designs for the Star Wars [illegible] proposed video game. In the field of video gaming, Chan's artwork has shaped releases such as [illegible]. In 2015, Chan founded San Francisco's [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

Doug Chiang [illegible] College for Creative Studies. In the late 1980s, Chiang got his professional start as a stop-motion animator on Pee-wee's Playhouse. After a stint as an advertising director with Rhythm and Hues Studios, Chiang joined Industrial Light & Magic as a creative director and contributed to ILM's visual effects efforts on Terminator 2: Judgment Day, Jumanji, Ghost, Forrest Gump, and more. In the late 1990s Chiang joined LucasFilm as design director on Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace and continued there as concept design supervisor on Episode II: Attack of the Clones. He worked with Robert Zemeckis as production designer on The Polar Express, Beowulf, and A Christmas Carol. He produced the illustrated novel [illegible] and received an honorary doctoral degree from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco in 2013. Among Chiang's professional accolades is an Academy Award for Death Becomes Her and a BAFTA Award for his independent film, [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

Ryan Church grew up loving dinosaurs and airplanes. He learned the craft of illustration from his father, an industrial designer, and [illegible] Art Center College of Design. Church moved full-time to the Art Center in [illegible] transportation design, but [illegible] for the [illegible] stories he could pursue a career that allowed him to bring to life the fantastic realms depicted in cinema. After graduating with a degree in entertainment design, Church spent time with Walt Disney Imagineering before joining Industrial Light & Magic's digital matte department. [illegible] and signed on as a concept design supervisor for the Star Wars prequel films Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith. He later contributed to the Star Wars [illegible] proposed video game. Church has contributed concept art to [illegible] War of the Worlds and has [illegible] Transformers, [illegible] Star Wars, [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

Amy Beth Christenson [illegible] the original Star Wars films, inspiring her to spend her childhood drawing fantastical characters and creatures. Growing up in a small farm town in Kansas, Christenson pursued an internship at the Kansas City Art Institute and the Ringling School of Art and Design, receiving her BFA in illustration in [illegible]. For the next eleven years, she combined her passions for Star Wars and video games as a concept artist for LucasArts. Christenson worked on eight original titles during that time, including a role as senior and lead concept designer for the games of Star Wars: The Force Unleashed series. In 2011 she became a senior concept designer [illegible]. [illegible] the Topps Star Wars trading card series, and she was one of [illegible] selected to create a limited-edition print for the official [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

Adam Duhlnan[?] is a Norwegian conceptual artist with extensive experience in film, computer gaming, and game publishing. His credits include [illegible] for Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith, as [illegible] conceptual art [illegible]. pp. [illegible]

Tyler[?] Del[illegible] [illegible] San Francisco [illegible] Art Center [illegible] Francisco's Academy of Art University [illegible].

[illegible] for Pyramids and later spent six years at LucasArts, where he contributed 3-D backgrounds to classic games, including Escape from Monkey Island. For the same gaming release Star Wars: Rogue Squadron, [illegible] played creating the game's world with a couple[illegible] of maps and vehicles which served as targets and set pieces for the player-controlled [illegible]. Del [illegible] spent four years at THQ/Heavy Iron and eventually found work with Disney's Imagineers [illegible]. With a balanced grasp of color, lighting, scale, and perspective, Del [illegible] by the power of an idea in a single image. pp. [illegible]

T.J. Frame graduated from the Art Center College of Design in 1997 and entered the growing field of video games. As a concept artist at Westwood Studios, he helped develop the look of many games in the popular Command & Conquer series, including Red Alert 2, Tiberian Sun, Red Alert 3, and Generals. Frame also worked on Emperor: Battle for Dune with Epitah[?] [illegible] and Squad Commander with [illegible] [illegible] during the production of Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith, where his [illegible] designs for [illegible] developed for the crystal planet of Mygeeto. After leaving LucasArts, Frame [illegible] Frame's [illegible] John Singer Sargent [illegible] as well as modern [illegible] and [illegible] including Frank [illegible]. p. [illegible]

Warren Fu [illegible] visual effects art director at Industrial Light & Magic [illegible] the Star Wars prequel trilogy, Revenge of the Sith [illegible] worked closely with [illegible] McCaig, Ryan Church, and Erik Tiemens to design the iconic villain General Grievous as well as numerous droids and creatures in Episode III [illegible] Magnamaid. After growing up in Oregon [illegible] California as a youth and graduated [illegible] to [illegible] of Carnegie Mellon [illegible] Industrial [illegible] Fantasy [illegible] concept art [illegible] degree at the University of California, Berkeley, and joined ILM after graduation to design [illegible] Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace. He has directed music videos for [illegible] artists including [illegible], Daft Punk [illegible] Haim [illegible] and the Strokes. pp. [illegible]

Chee Lee[?] is a concept artist working in Singapore. He studied [illegible] in Singapore, and [illegible] games [illegible] industrial [illegible] [illegible] Lucasfilm [illegible] Star Wars [illegible] Monkey Island [illegible] [illegible] Star Wars: The Clone Wars [illegible] pp. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Greg Knight contributed his skills as a digital concept designer to films including Robert Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* and the 2011 Disney animated feature *Mars Needs Moms*, as well as designs for [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Fabian [illegible] has worked as a concept illustrator on projects including *The Avengers*, [illegible] *Star Trek*, and the 2013 film *After Earth*. [illegible]

[illegible]

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his books with doodles all throughout high school. A failed attempt to get into the FH Formdesign in Munich, Germany, led to Ulrich obtaining a master's degree in Japanese Studies five years later, and throughout his education he supported himself as a self-taught graphic designer for online and marketing agencies. In 2010, after having spent two years as a lead graphic designer in Singapore, Ulrich finally enrolled in the FZD School of Design to fulfill his dream of becoming a concept artist for the entertainment industry. After graduating Ulrich found employment with LucasArts Singapore, working on the *Star Wars: 1313* proposed video game, among other initiatives. Ulrich is a published concept artist and illustrator. He currently works for Ubisoft Singapore and is pursuing his own freelancing business. p. 148

Chris Voy graduated with a degree in Art and Design from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and has lent his skills as a lighting concept artist to Lucasfilm Animation, LucasArts, Industrial Light & Magic, and game developer Visual Concepts. Among Voy's gaming credits are the titles *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*, *Star Wars Republic Commando*, *Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords*, [illegible], and *Final Fantasy IX*. Voy's specialties include concept matte painting, and his work has been featured in the book [illegible] *Visual Development for Animation and Beyond*. pp. 118, 157

James Zhang is an illustrator and conceptual designer who founded San Francisco's Concept Art House in 2006. Zhang studied at Ringling College of Art and Design and began his career at LucasArts in 1998. There he helped visualize the gaming worlds in such classics as *Star Wars: Starfighter*, [illegible], and *Star Wars: Republic Commando*. In 2004 Zhang moved to [illegible] as lead artist on the dragon-riding game [illegible]. As an artist, Zhang has also contributed illustrations to the roleplaying materials used in the Dungeons & Dragons universe, including *Drow of the Underdark* and *Monster Manual III*. At Concept Art House, Zhang oversees a full production art studio based out of Shanghai, and has led gaming efforts on behalf of a client list that includes Zynga and Pocket Gems. He continues to champion the importance of art direction for the growing fields of social and mobile gaming. p. 196

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIK TIEMENS

by J. W. Rinzler

J. W. RINZLER: I remember George came to us at the first art department meeting for *Revenge of the Sith* and said something like, "We're going to have seven wars on seven planets."

ERIK TIEMENS: So much of that movie's artwork was done without a script. We basically had a list: planets, locations, types of architecture. It was very loose and exploratory. George is always talking about his movies as kinetic, moving paintings. You're in the theater, imagery is moving by, and it's like one, moving painting.

RINZLER: *For Episode III, I believe you were creating more of your artwork digitally than on Episode II?*

TIEMENS: On Episode II, I was very committed to doing gouache paintings and traditional paintings, but I also had the computer going. I was finding that I could still get a painterly quality in the digital painting. And they were going so much faster that it became production-friendly, and preproduction-friendly, to get ideas out quickly and not be slowed down by the process of painting. Before I found that I was getting too in love with, "Oh, I'm spending the day painting in gouache. How lovely is this?" It's good to get the business done. So the digital paintings superseded that. You can send files to different people in different departments, that kind of thing. Efficient.

RINZLER: *You're under a certain amount of pressure to work: it's almost like you have a quota. You have to have a number of paintings done by Friday.*

TIEMENS: Yes, yes. So, there was this dance of creating at a high speed. Just so we'd have images—and we'd be straightforward: "Oh, wow, lots of pieces this week." But at the same time, I felt it wasn't a weight or a burden. It was more of an elated feeling, to explore and try different ideas. Especially with the digital painting and sketch work, it seemed like there was nothing to lose. We weren't afraid of showing wild ideas. There actually wasn't a lot of self-editing. We were just doing.

RINZLER: *And George encouraged that.*

TIEMENS: Yeah, yeah. Iain McCaig always mentions that—that we were like an ensemble of jazz musicians, just kind of doing our thing, kind of riffing. Ryan Church has a transportation design background and love of machinery, and so it was a perfect fit for him to go off and do a lot of the vehicle design. I'm coming from a background, primarily, where I'm interested in lighting and landscapes. I love traditional painting. It becomes autobiographical for the artists, their passions. We draw on that and then it comes out in the work.

RINZLER: *Let's talk about that for a second.* Star Wars *is extremely malleable. It's a long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. All bets are off. You can do whatever you want, and it somehow fits.*

TIEMENS: It's incredibly liberating. You can pull in all kinds of obscure references. I have a real passion for history, so I could bring some old [illegible] design element that might be the underbelly of a spaceship. Just marrying combinations that maybe people haven't thought of. Those hybrids are exciting.

RINZLER: *During Episodes II and III, did you see yourself as part of a concept art tradition, starting with Ralph McQuarrie and Joe Johnston and Nilo Rodis-Jamero?*

TIEMENS: I always felt like an invited guest. They were the old masters—not that I want to call them "old"—but they were the masters that, when I saw their art as a child, you put them in that category of film design. They had so much influence. They were so inspiring. It was humbling to be around that art. And then you contribute what you personally love doing.

RINZLER: *How do you go about creating a concept painting?*

TIEMENS: Traditionally, you get a script when you're working on a film. So, you read the script or story treatment or outline or even just notes. Reading these, you have a gut response. Just doodling, even in pencil, right by the words, you can work out your first impressions, as the sketches start dancing across the paper. I like to read the words and conjure up the images. So a typical approach would be starting with thumbnail sketches.

Then I'll get sheets of paper and make lists of places, things, locations, time periods, cultures, what have you, and start combining those. Let's say, for instance, if I were approaching Utapau for the first time, when I got a description from George, I would start wide, even almost like an aerial view. "Okay, we're first going to this planet; we're just hovering over the landscape. And wait—there's a savannah and undulating, but fairly flat grasslands. And then, wait a minute, there are depressions, deep sinkholes dotting the landscape."

And then as we get a little bit closer, as if you're in a helicopter or a spaceship, and you start going down into this sinkhole, not only do you see the cliffs, but you see these organic yet architectural forms coming out of the cliff walls.

Just describing a journey to this new location, I might take a storyboard approach, where I start wide and I work my way down into the details, until you're literally on a landing platform. What I used to do, often, was scan these drawings in, and then work digitally—start doing studies of color, experimenting with palettes. And while that's getting blocked in, I'll use the resources of the library and research for help. Then I'll start putting it all together and make sheets. I might have a hundred images that boil down to twenty.

RINZLER: *But you guys would be at it sometimes sixteen hours a day, for months on end. How can you maintain that kind of creativity for that long?*

TIEMENS: It was pretty crazy when I think about it now. We were very productive. The initial spark to create that quantity of work is the blank-canvas effect, when you want to take a first stab at what something looks like. And George gave us so much room for hundreds of blank canvases. It was like we were just running mad. It was also inspiring to be around the others—and George—that made it such a joy to dive into the work.

But if you paint sixteen hours a day, you get tired, right? So it was always a nice break to talk to the librarians or researchers. And we'd have meetings and we'd talk; it was a way of conversing, digressing. It wasn't like we were in [illegible]—but we were very busy.

RINZLER: *You guys would do all this artwork and then George would go off and shoot. But you would still get assignments while he was shooting, right?*

TIEMENS: Yes. We would have some breaks, but we would get assignments now and then, or fresh footage, and then, "Okay, George needs this design or this background." One of my assignments, in postproduction, was to give feedback to the matte department, which was very much related to the preproduction concept phase. Because I was able to give accuracy for and remember those early meetings when George said, "Oh, we have to have this," or, "No, it's this kind of building . . ." or "That's the reason why it's this sort of look. It's going to be done with this time of day." I was able to convey those ideas.

RINZLER: *It was almost like you were George's proxy.*

TIEMENS: Just follow-throughs, to make sure the original concept wasn't misinterpreted or taken in the wrong direction.

RINZLER: *Let's go general here for a second. What did you see as the role of concept art in a movie's production? How would you define that?*

TIEMENS: It's changing rapidly. Good concept design is more than just the design itself. Just get [illegible]: "What is the soul of the story? What are we trying to convey?" I'm always humbled and reminded that when you do a concept painting, it isn't what people see. They'll see what's on the screen. If you're able to follow through that design to the scene, to the spirit, and it's done in a way that captures the energy, the first initial flash—that, to me, is important. Creating that link from the idea. Because I think a lot of times designs get lost in the translation. It's just the nature of big effects groups and all the work that has to be done. But the quality of the work is so high now; it's getting so tight and photoreal. Our earlier digital paintings seem a little too loose now.

The irony that I have is that concept art is now going to be so photoreal that you might as well start animating it, turning it into a little production. So maybe a concept art now is shifting to a video storyboard artist. Maybe that's the new place.

But I think the happy wedge where concept art resides is the moment of those first script drafts, the rapport that the artist has with the director and production designer as they get those first ideas off the ground.

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Joe Johnston is an award-winning film director and effects artist whose directorial career includes classics such as *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, *Jumanji*, and *October Sky*. Johnston served as a storyboard artist and special effects art director for the first Star Wars trilogy, and he won an Academy Award® for Best Visual Effects for his work on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Doug Chiang signed on with Industrial Light & Magic as a creative director, contributing to visual effects on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Jumanji*, *Forrest Gump*, and more. Chiang joined Lucasfilm as design director on *The Phantom Menace* and continued as concept design supervisor on *Attack of the Clones*.

JACKET FRONT

Ralph McQuarrie
Darth Vader vs. Luke Skywalker

Concept art for *A New Hope*

[illegible]

JACKET BACK

Erik Tiemens
[illegible]

Concept art for Star Wars 1313, proposed video game

[illegible]

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